WEEKEND JOURNAL.

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So you want to be a...

All you need to know to start your second career

Inside: What's next in luxury hotel design

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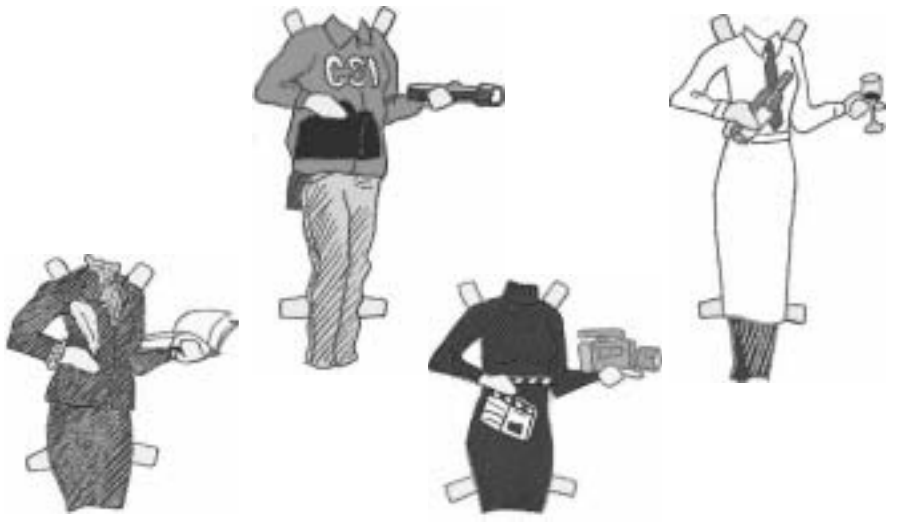
All you need to know to start your second career



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Left, Dianna Wong's design for Peacock Alley at the W Washington, D.C. hotel (Edward Addeo)

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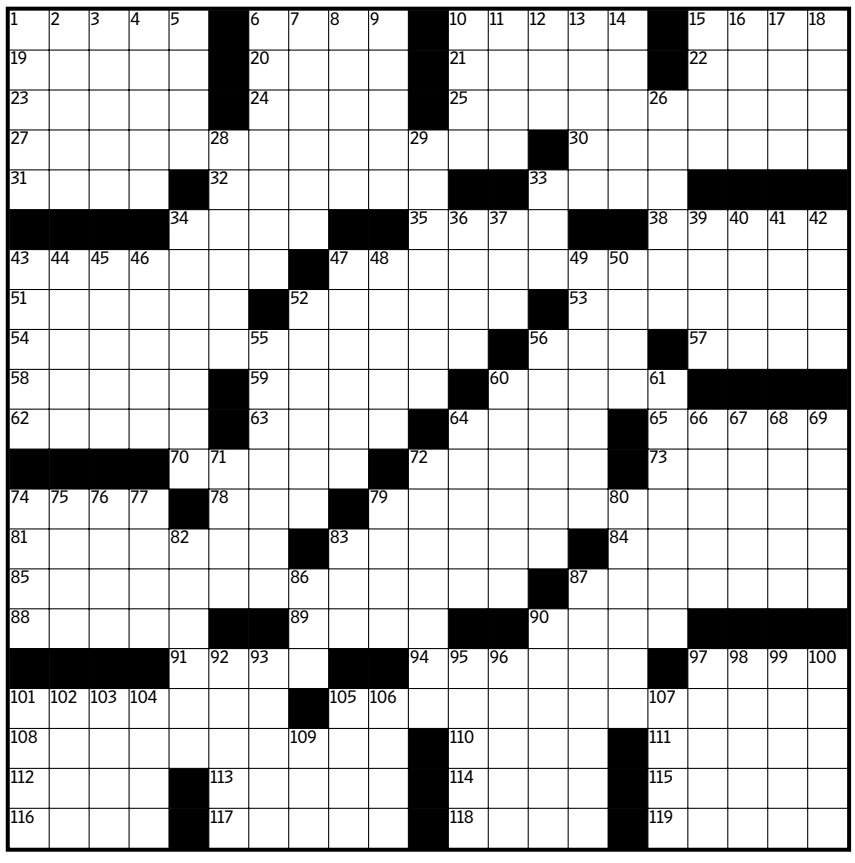

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Last Week's solution

H	O	O	V	E	R	■	C	L	I	N	T	O	N	■	R	E	A	G	A	N
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The new Hermès store in Manhattan

Clockwise from top: Frank Oudeman; Skot Yobbagy; Coach

A shop of their own

Hermès and Coach open menswear-only outlets

By Christina Passariello And Ray A. Smith

Left, a rendering of a Coach store slated to open in May; above, an $8,500 baseball glove from Hermès

High-end fashion has long catered to women more than men. Hermès and Coach are the latest fashion houses making new efforts to shrink the gender gap.

French luxury house Hermès International opened its first men's-only store last week, on New York City's Madison Avenue; it envisions opening more in the future. Coach earlier this month said it, too, plans to launch its first boutique for men in May, next door to its women's boutique in New York's Greenwich Village. Ralph Lauren is converting its iconic Rhinelander Mansion in New York into a men's store this autumn. Other brands, such as Dolce & Gabbana and Salvatore Ferragamo, also have been creating special stores for men in recent years.

"Men don't like to enter a men's and women's store to find their products at the back of the store," says Ferragamo Chief Executive Michele Norsa. "In our women's and men's stores, the men's space is often penalized. The women's collections are wider and tend to steal space from men."

Menswear has proved more resilient than women's fashion during the economic crisis. Hermès's Wall Street store, which carries goods for both genders but is weighted toward its businessman clientele, was one of the fashion house's first U.S. stores to show signs of recovery during the second half of last year, said Beatriz Gonzalez-Cristobal, Hermès's executive vice president for distribution.

Retailers' orders for Dolce & Gabbana's new autumn men's collection are up 16% compared with last year, according to Chief Executive Cristiana Ruella. The men's collection made up nearly half Dolce & Gabbana's sales last year. Coach's sales to men on its e-commerce site are growing strongly, says Mike Tucci, Coach's president of North American retail.

Men tend to see shopping as less of an indulgence than women—which meant they didn't cut back as much during the downturn. In a survey of the wealthiest 10% of U.S. households conducted by the American Affluence Research Center in October, men said they planned to reduce spending much less than women on designer apparel and fine jewelry and watches. Twenty-three percent of male respondents said they hadn't reduced overall spending since the recession started, compared with 14% of women.

Also, selling to men is a typical entry ticket for luxury brands entering emerging markets such as China and Russia. Newly wealthy men tend to spend on signs of affluence, such as expensive watches, before their wives indulge in shopping sprees. "Men decide on spending," says Dolce & Gabbana's Ms. Ruella.

This month, Ferragamo was one of the first luxury houses to open a men's-only store in China—a country where it has 40 boutiques. Mr. Norsa says that generally, emerging luxury markets are where Ferragamo's sales of men's products are stronger.

According to market research group Euromonitor International, sales of men's designer clothing and accessories in South Korea rose 48% between 2004 and 2009, compared with 7% for women's.

But in more established luxury markets such as the U.S., Japan and Western Europe, women have long taken precedence. That leaves men feeling overlooked.

"It's an inconvenience to have to traipse through the women's department or perfumes to get to 'my' section of the store," says Jesse Stillman, a 28-year-old consultant in Florida. When shopping in U.S. department stores such as Saks Fifth Avenue or small boutiques, he has had to ask a sales associate where the men's department is.

The male shopper's ordeal is compounded by men's newfound independence. More men are shopping for themselves, and don't have women to guide them. About 75% of men in the U.S. shopped for themselves last year, compared with just 52% in 1995, according to Marshal Cohen, chief industry analyst at market researcher NPD Group. Many of the new shoppers are younger men who don't have hang-ups about being style-conscious, experts say.

Hermès' first men's store contrasts with its woman-centric New York flagship. For years, the luxury fashion house toyed with the idea of having a men's store. Two years ago, a brick building across the street from Hermès' Madison Avenue store became available. Whereas the original store is in a long, low building that stretches down the street, Hermès Man is in a tall and narrow space.

Hermès Man is designed to feel cozy. Hermès's architects built up: four floors, the top two with wood-paneled walls and ceilings. "It's intimate, like the ideal dressing room," says Ms. Gonzalez-Cristobal. Special items created for the opening include an $8,500 baseball glove in a signature Hermès red.

The club aesthetic applies to many of the men's-only stores. Dolce & Gabbana's seven boutiques, starting with Milan in 2003, are darker and more sober than the glamorous women's stores. Coach plans to use leather club seats in its new store, a look similar to the leather couches in Ferragamo's Los Angeles store.

Still, there is one kind of customer that brands are careful not to alienate in the men's stores: "women who want to buy gifts for a guy," Coach's Mr. Tucci says.

An old city's new approach

Its 600th birthday nearing, Ahmedabad revitalizes and markets its charms

By Margot Cohen

Ahmedabad, India

It's easy to love a city where residents make sure to feed the birds. More than 120 bird feeders, known as *chabutara*, are scattered throughout the oldest neighborhoods of Ahmedabad, founded in 1411. Why do these creatures get so much attention? "They are innocent souls," replies my guide.

The care and feeding of tourists is a more recent phenomenon. Long overshadowed by Rajasthan, its palace-filled and perpetually self-promoting neighbor, India's western state of Gujarat has been slow to market the attractions of its biggest city, whose population exceeds five million. But it's a surprisingly satisfying destination, including some outstanding museums, memorable walking tours (held both day and night) and delectably nuanced vegetarian cuisine.

With an eye to the city's 600th anniversary next year, a growing number of entrepreneurs, social activists and public officials are gunning for a United Nations designation as a World Heritage City by revitalizing the older section, east of the Sabarmati River. (West of the river is a city of high-rises and malls, noted for its pharmaceutical and chemical industries and educational institutions.)

Hundreds of properties are gradually undergoing restoration. Pedestrians can peer at the artistry of 200-year-old wooden homes with floral and animal carvings, and secret passages allowing swift flight in case of attack. These escape routes out of the narrow, circular neighborhoods are a legacy of the insecurity during the slow collapse of the Mughal Empire starting 300 years ago.

Whether or not Ahmedabad ultimately wins that heritage label—and with it, an anticipated influx of tourists and preservation funds—the point is to stir civic pride. "If a tree has to grow taller, the roots have to grow deeper," says Debashish Nayak, an adviser to the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, a local administrative body.

That pride remains deeply scarred by Hindu-Muslim violence that erupted eight years ago, in February 2002. Painful memories of riots and deaths, on top of the trauma of a major earthquake the year before, make it tough for some Indians to conceive of Ahmedabad as a carefree tourist destination. Other potential visitors are discouraged by Gujarat's official ban on alcohol—though it is possible for tourists to obtain special permits to drink. (The government operates a number of liquor stores in the city.)

I decide to skip the paperwork and simply indulge in a teetotaler's trip: museum-hopping, munching and meandering the narrow lanes of the old city.

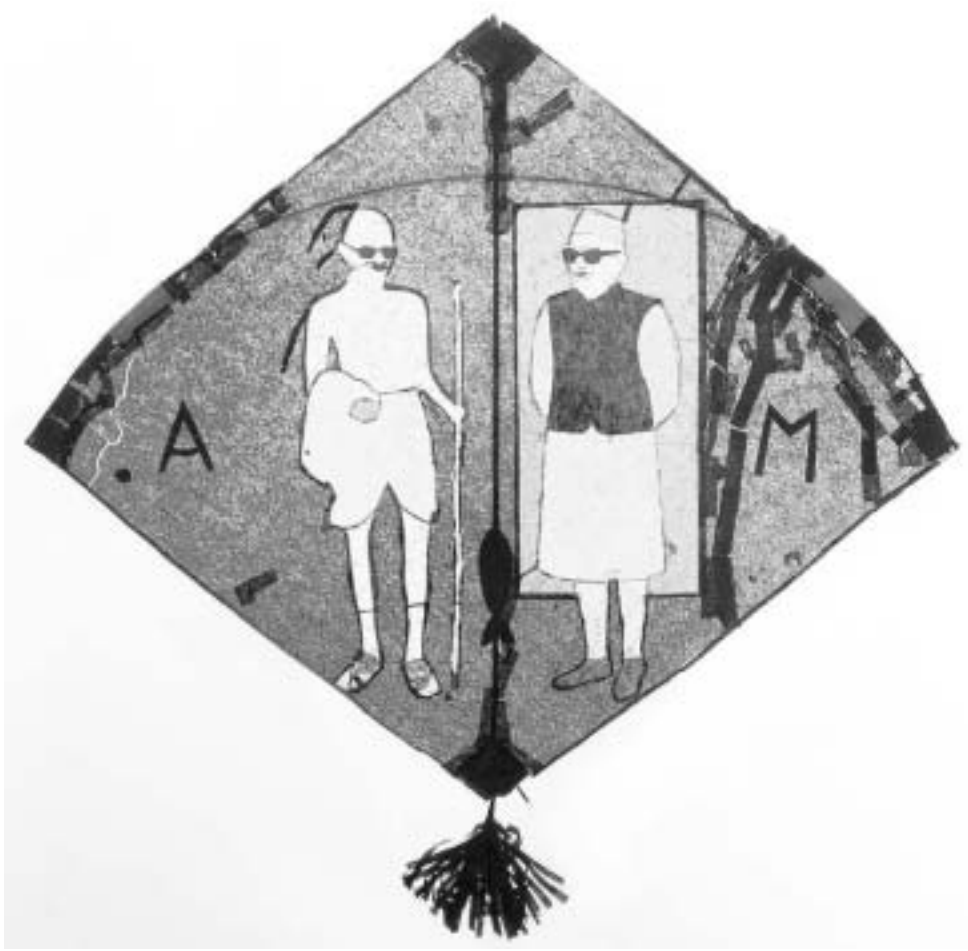
Along the way, I encounter some of the charismatic elders who have played a leading role in Ahmedabad's cultural development, starting with 94-year-old Leena Sarabhai, founder of the Shreyas Folk Art Museum.

The museum celebrates the intricate embroidery and folk artifacts from rural Gujarat, though an eclectic collection in a separate gallery crosses state and national borders, with ghoulish Chau dance masks from West Bengal state and colorful round playing cards from Maharashtra state vying for attention with dance costumes from the Indonesian island of Bali and art from Cambodia. For me, though, the *pièce de résistance* is a life-size camel mannequin tricked out in all the traditional Gujarati trimmings: red pom-poms dangle from the bridle, a richly embroidered cloth covers the beast's torso, and silver anklets appear below. While many exhibits lack detailed descriptions, they send the imagination whirling.

That's exactly the idea, says Ms.

PhotoIndia.com/Namit Arora (3); www.ArtByPino.com (kite)

The Jumma Mesjid was built by Sultan Ahmed Shah, after whom Ahmedabad is named.



Clockwise from top left, the old city features an abundance of bird feeders and wooden homes decorated with carvings; Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru meet at the Kite Museum.

Sarabhai, who founded the museum in 1977 within the grassy complex of a school, part of the children's folk-art education.

In her youth, Ms. Sarabhai was an energetic traveler. During a chat at her high-ceilinged 1930s home, she recalls journeys to Turkey, China, Indonesia, France, Italy and the U.S., among other places. "When I went to those countries, I didn't while away my time shopping. I didn't see the point," she tells me tartly. "I spent my time looking at museums."

Her own museum, she notes, is "just a baby" compared with the tremendous collection of textiles amassed by her sister Gira, now 86, and their late brother Gautam. Ahmedabad's Sarabhai clan, whose fortune was based on the city's once-thriving textile industry, still draws comparisons with the Rockefellers in terms of moneyed influence and devotion to education and the arts.

The two siblings' Calico Textile Museum, launched way back in 1949, is often cited by local artists and designers as their favorite museum in town, due to its blizzard of colors, textures and motifs. It draws scholars from the U.S. and Europe. The display, which also includes exquisite bronze sculptures and miniature paintings, is divided between a modern wing and a rambling mansion where the Sarabhai children once received their European tutors. "Every time I go there, I see things differently. I seem to gain something all the time," says Archana Shah, founder of Bandhej, a high-end clothing company based in Ahmedabad, with six outlets in India.

But visitors must comply with some strict rules. Calico admits only 30 people a day, in two groups, due to fears that body heat could harm the collection. Everyone follows the appointed guide, a veteran of 20 years' service with one name, Kamalini, while a squad of four sari-clad ladies scurries behind the group, closing doors and turning off lights. At the start of the morning tour, I am immediately tempted to linger. Nothing doing. "Have a glimpse. Move on. Don't just stand there," scolds Kamalini.

The guide knows she will never win a popularity contest in Ahmedabad. "They *curse* me," she says, hurriedly explaining that the hustle is necessary to preserve the textiles for future generations. Ironically, it makes me yearn for a return visit. Instead, I head to the N.C. Mehta Gallery, where I have full liberty to linger over 287 miniature paintings collected by an ardent civil servant under the British Raj. Equestrian portraits abound, radiating royal panache.

It's an airy, well-lit space, thanks to director Ratan Parimoo, who also heads the neighboring Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Museum, a major repository for ancient sculptures, scrolls and other art works related to India's Jain religion. After arriving in 2007, Mr. Parimoo remade that museum, rooting around storage areas for neglected artifacts, added explanatory texts and polished the display. In India, where so many museums appear buried in dust and blighted by fluorescent lights, such improvements are no small achievement.

Likewise, I find myself admiring the jewel box-like quality of the Kite Museum, where bright geometric patterns glow from backlit display boxes. Kites, usually made of paper, are a big deal in Ahmedabad; during Uttarayan, a festival in mid-January, children and adults clamber onto the rooftops and fly them from dawn till dusk. The museum's founder, 75-year-old Bhanu Shah, says he began collecting kites in 1958, mostly from northern and western India, and while arthritis ended his kite-flying some five years ago, it didn't damp his appreciation. "When I saw them, I thought, these are not kites, these are paintings," he says.

My favorite kite is more historical than the rest: It shows a bare-chested Mahatma Gandhi next to a Jawaharlal Nehru clad in a vest and cap. A dense kite chronology, listed on the walls, also swerves into poetry, including these lines by 19th century Bengali poet Biharilal Chakravarty: "No object in the world can separate me from your heart/Though a kite may fly, and soar up and down,/its line is firmly held in my hands."

Love does seem to be in the air at the Amdavad ni Gufa, a gallery/permanent installation that draws a young and funky crowd from late afternoon to early evening. A collaboration between the controversial Indian artist M.F. Husain and prominent architect B.V. Doshi, it juts above ground here and there with curvy, free-form abandon, while visitors wander the cave-like space below (walls streaked with red, green and yellow), through silhouettes of wild-haired, buxom women. The place attracts an awful lot of couples taking pictures of themselves.

But to witness the sheer romance of the everyday, there is no better choice than the Vechaar Utensils Museum. The man with an eye for graceful terra-cotta pots, sensuous hookahs and pounded copper vessels is Surendra Patel, an interior designer who founded this museum in 1981. The idea struck him, he says, during a trip to Gujarat's Saurashtra region, where he was aghast to find hundred-year-old utensils on the scrap heap. "I saw them being hammered and put in the mouth of the furnace, to melt for their copper value," the designer recalls.

The museum wraps around an open courtyard, allowing for a leisurely stroll. But one blue room stops me in my tracks: It holds dozens of betel-nut cutters and walnut crackers—shaped like peacocks, horses, elephants, lions and entwined lovers. Upright against the wall, the marvelous collection resembles a mysterious alphabet.

At age 70, Mr. Patel still bubbles with plans. He wants to establish a museum to display another of his collections: 1,500 chairs he's gathered from India and overseas. The Museum of Chairs seems certain to add to the city's attractions—and for Ahmedabad's weary museum-hoppers, perhaps even a place to sit down.

Margot Cohen is a writer based in Bangalore.

Trip planner

GETTING THERE

Connections are available from Mumbai, New Delhi, Bangalore and Chennai. Singapore Airlines flies direct from Singapore twice weekly.

WHERE TO STAY

The House of MG (☎ 91-79-2550-6946; www.houseofmg.com), a boutique hotel in a 1924 building, offers vintage charm, luxurious bathrooms, and proximity to the old city.
Arts Reverie (☎ 91-79-2217-0629; www.artsreverie.com) is set in one of the city's oldest neighborhoods, in what was once the home of a jeweler.
For a more standard five-star experience, there's **Le Meridien Ahmedabad** (☎ 91-79-2550-5505).

WHERE TO EAT

A favorite of locals is the breezy, informal **Swati Snacks** (☎ 91-79-2640-5900), with Gujarati vegetarian specialties including dhokla, a steamed cake made from a fermented mix of rice and lentil flours, and handvo, a chili-laced baked cake studded with corn and sprinkled with sesame seeds.

A fancier venue is **Agashiye**, at the House of MG, whose prodigious thalis start with beet juice and a crunchy salad of chickpeas and beets and proceed with eggplant, potato fritters, lentils and other vegetable dishes. In the evenings, it's served on the hotel roof.

Manek Chowk, a night market in the old city, bursts with food stalls serving everything from puffed rice to chocolate pizza.

WHAT TO DO

For the clearest views of the old city's impressive architecture, a walking tour starts at the Swaminarayan Mandir temple at 8 a.m., when the narrow streets are largely empty of traffic. Sights including a square mixing Persian, Mughal, Maratha and British architecture, an awe-inspiring 15th-century mosque and the marble depths of a Jain temple—as well as India's oldest stock-exchange building. (Tickets are 50 rupees (about $1.10) for foreigners, 20 rupees for Indians. ☎ 91-79-3298-4116)

A night tour starts at 10 p.m. at the Mangaldas ni Haveli, a restored 200-year-old house turned into a cafe and craft shop. (It's run by the same folks at the House of MG, and the hotel can arrange short rickshaw trips to the haveli, which visitors might have trouble finding.) Aside from parsing the architecture and water systems in the old city, the flashlight-wielding guide happily veers off into more esoteric topics, including the "science of color." The stroll ends on a rousing note overlooking the King's Tomb, where, for generations, the same family of drummers has signaled the 11 p.m. close of the city gates (50 rupees; ☎ 91-79-2214-0416.)

MUSEUMS

Shreyas Folk Art Museum
Web: www.shreyasfoundation.in
Calico Textile Museum
Web: www.calicomuseum.com
N.C. Mehta Gallery
☎ 91-79-2630-9167
Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Museum
☎ 91-79-6306-8883
Kite Museum
☎ 91-79-2657-8369
Vechaar Utensils Museum
Web: www.vechaar.com

Fresh taste from Bordeaux

The coming 2007 vintage brings lighter wines—at a lighter price

By Peter Hellman

Too often, Bordeaux winemakers bask in a sunny summer, only to helplessly watch the vintage spoiled by a rainy autumn. In 2007, it was the summer that was rainy and humid—more like the bayou than Bordeaux. Then came a miraculously sunny September, with gentle breezes to dry out the grapes and intensify their flavors.

According to the growers, it saved the vintage. Curious to test their argument, I recently tried two dozen examples of the vintage. The occasion was the New York stopover on the annual tour of the Union des Grands Crus de Bordeaux, a preview pouring of the coming vintage for the wine press and trade, hosted by what might be called the upper middle class of the Bordeaux châteaux (the region's royalty, the first growths such as Lafite Rothschild and Latour, don't join the tour.)

Right away, I noticed a cautionary sign: Only 81 châteaux on hand, far fewer than had shown off the ballyhooed 2005 vintage two years earlier. "Some proprietors didn't come because they think you Americans won't buy this vintage," one said with a Gallic shrug.

It's true that Americans tend to blow hot or cold on each Bordeaux vintage, depending mainly on advance word from critics and retailers issued long before the wines are bottled. It's also true that, while the Bordeaux style is copied from Napa Valley to the North Island of New Zealand, only in the home region are vintage differences so utterly distinctive. The 2000 vintage is dense and forceful, 2001 is subtle and soft, 2002 is lean and crisp, 2003 (product of a murderously hot summer) lies heavy in the glass, 2004 is austere, the glamorous and much-in-demand 2005 is the wine world's version of Penelope Cruz, while the perfectly decent 2006 is doomed to fetch coffee for Penelope Cruz.

I was pleasantly surprised by the 2007 vintage, which resembles none of the previous seven. Nearly all the 2007 wines I tasted have welcome freshness and transparency. They are free of the meagerness and nasty tannins that can beset lackluster Bordeaux vintages. A less heavy and serious wine than some of its predecessors, the 2007 Bordeaux "will be perfect as a beverage," says Richard Brierley, a London-based wine merchant. "You can drink it while waiting for your 2005s to mature."

One more selling point for the 2007 Bordeaux: It is likely to be the least expensive vintage in a long while. That would be a welcome change from three years ago, when prices for the 2005 vintage soared to levels that put formerly affordable wines out of reach for most of us. In New York, a case of Petrus 2005 runs $39,000 at retailer Sherry-Lehmann.

Much of Bordeaux pricing is determined by the sale of wine "futures." Merchants and journalists taste a new crop of Bordeaux in the spring after the harvest, while it's still in the barrel and may even still be fermenting, and make early assessments of the quality. Château proprietors then set an opening price for a portion of the new vintage, which they sell to importers. Importers, in turn, sell contracts on cases of the vintage to retailers, who resell them to collectors at a set price—two years before the wine actually reaches store shelves. The bet collectors make is that the price of the wine will go up significantly between the time they buy the futures contract and the time the wine actually lands in stores.

Over the past decade, this usually proved to be a winning a bet. But when the economic downturn hit, many cash-strapped collectors stopped buying Bordeaux futures, and importers and retailers suddenly faced the prospect of being stuck with surpluses of high-priced Bordeaux. Last year, importer Chateau & Estate, a division of British drinks giant Diageo and long a dominating force in the American market for Bordeaux, announced that it wouldn't be buying the 2008 vintage, and it will buy none of the 2009.

The result has been a drop in prices, starting with the 2006 vintage, as Chateau & Estate has been selling off its Bordeaux stock. In November, according to a dealer's wholesale list for the 2006 vintage, bellwether Bordeaux labels were sharply discounted. Haut-Brion was reduced at wholesale to $1,540 a case from $3,135, Petrus to $4,950 from $7,600. Retail prices would be about 50% higher.

A Bordeaux broker, or *négociant*, called Joanne has stepped into the breach, purchasing a significant chunk of Chateau & Estate's stock of back vintages, according to David Milligan, New York-based president of Joanne's new U.S. subsidiary. So far, it hasn't purchased the 2007.

That vintage was the last to be sold as futures before the financial crisis. Léoville-Las Cases was priced at $2,000 a case, Haut-Brion at $5,000 and Petrus at $17,400. Retail prices for these wines won't be posted until next month, but it's likely that in many cases they will be significantly lower than the futures prices.

In all but collector-oriented wine shops, Bordeaux has yielded shelf space to a flood of skillfully made, moderately priced New World alternatives. Yet Bordeaux remains the largest fine-wine category on earth. No other wines from any region surpass it in balancing firm structure and nuance, or in aging so well. At a lunch just before heading to the Union des Grand Crus tasting, a gathering of wine journalists was served a pair of 1990 Bordeaux reds: Domaine de Chevalier and Haut-Bailly, both from the commune of Pessac-Léognan. The former wine was aromatically flamboyant, the latter calm and deep. At an age when most Bordeaux pretenders are fading, these two wines were just coming into their prime.

Peter Hellman contributes to the Wine Spectator.

Image Source/Getty Images

Recommended 2007 Bordeaux (shelf prices are likely to be lower than listed prices)

Château Clerc Milon 2007, Pauillac ($42): Deep in cedary flavor and tannic, this wine needs a few years in the cellar before serving.

Château Doisy-Daëne 2007, Sauternes ($22 a half bottle): The 2007 sweet Bordeaux are exceptionally fine, balancing candied fruit and honey flavors with an acidic kick that keeps the quaff from being cloying. Here's a prime example. If you still eat foie gras, this wine will partner it perfectly.

Château Leoville Poyferre 2007, Saint-Julien ($53): Earthy and already soft, with lots of palate presence.

Château Lagrange 2007, Saint-Julien ($38): Exemplary. This wine, blackberry-fragrant, manages to be light-bodied yet firm at the core. A perfect roast-chicken accompaniment.

Château d'Angludet 2007, Margaux ($28): Not in the top tier of the Margaux appellation, but never far behind, except in price. Dark and ripe, with curranty fruit sneaking in late.

Château Latour Martillac 2007, Pessac-Léognan ($22): Sweetly fruity in the mouth and sleek in texture.

WHAT'S NEXT

DIANNA WONG

Eric Raptosh

By Ketaki Gokhale

The recession may be taking a heavy toll on the high-end travel business, but hotel-design guru Dianna Wong sees opportunity in Asia, where rising middle classes will fuel a new demand for affordable luxury.

Born in Hong Kong and raised in rural Montana and Los Angeles, Ms. Wong has a unique global view of the luxury hotel business. She launched her Los Angeles-based architecture firm, Dianna Wong Architecture + Design, 12 years ago and has worked on projects as diverse as the swanky new W Hotel in Washington, D.C., Caesars Golf Macau, and the Governors Ballroom in Hollywood—the venue for the official Oscars after-party.

Although her trademark is a blend of classicism and modernity, sparing use of color and simple geometry, her real focus is not on style, but on solving problems using space and proportion. The style of each of her projects is different, and reflects a unique "storyline," she says.

Ms. Wong studied environmental design and architecture at Harvard, and has worked at several well-known architecture companies, including hotel design giant HBA/Hirsch Bedner Associates in Santa Monica, California, William L. Pereira & Associates (creator of the iconic Transamerica Pyramid in San Francisco), and Johnson Fain. But her love affair with architecture began much earlier—she traces it back to her youth, when her family first moved to the U.S.

Another in a series of articles pondering the shape of things to come

As a 7-year-old, she had a life-size dollhouse: the basement of her family's home in Montana. She would collect bricks and planks, and random knickknacks, using them to create a full-scale environment, complete with walls and rooms. "It was the best playhouse in the whole neighborhood," she recalls.

Architecture, she found out early on, was a field in which she could be both practical and creative. "Being Chinese, you are taught that you have to go into something that is financially stable such as law or finance or medicine, but none of those things appealed to me at all," Ms. Wong says. "But I knew that if I pursued a life in the arts, I might not be able to support myself. So this was the best of both worlds."

For Ms. Wong, there's been no looking back. By year-end, the single mother of two hopes to open an office in Hong Kong to capitalize on opportunities in Asia. Weekend Journal Asia recently caught a few minutes with Ms. Wong to talk about her life and the future of luxury hotels.

Where do you go to find peace and quiet?

If I've got three or four days...Montana—that's where I grew up, and it's one of the few places in this country where you feel the force of nature. If I just had a day, I'd go to the ocean and put my feet in the sand.

How many hours do you spend working?

I never turn my mind off. My best ideas [come to me] when I am sleeping, or at the moment of waking—I mean, these epiphanies.

What example of architecture do you admire most?

Piazza San Marco in Venice. It's alive with people and music and sunlight.

What's your favorite hotel that you didn't design?

Hôtel du Cap-Eden-Roc, sitting on the tip of Cap d'Antibes.

How do you view your role in the field?

Being a woman and having a firm pretty much as a sole proprietor all this time...it sets me as a role model to some extent. I also see myself as part of a "third wave" going into Asia. Western design in Asia came in and out and it was performed by Westerners that were importing their work into China. The second wave might have been homegrown talent in China or in Asia absorbing the Western designs and coming up with their own views and products from that. The third wave is expat Asians who were born there, but educated in the West. They are now coming back with their expertise and helping China develop for the next generation their own style, their own view of what modern Chinese design might be.

What design trends have you seen in hotel rooms?

Opening the bathroom to the bedroom has become a trend in the last three to five years—it has a lot to do with travelers representing the "single" demographic. They want a full spa experience when traveling.

What's next for hotels in Asia?

In Asia, travel has been provided on a very high level—über-five-star hotels. The sector that has not been serviced very well is the three-to-four-stars, and I think as China grows in wealth and grows a middle class, there needs to be brands that will be developed for a younger demographic...homegrown hotels that develop an aesthetic that speaks about modern China, rather than emulating or copying other brands.

Exotic getaways will also become more accessible, hopefully, whether it's in the *hutongs* [alleyways] of Beijing or some other amazing outdoor area in China...preserving these places, and making them welcoming to travelers—this will be a growing trend.

What will hotels of the future look like and feel like?

In the next five years, the mantra of providing the best...for the least is going to become ever-present. In other words, if you go into an extended-stay two-star hotel, you are going to get wireless, better thread-counts on your sheets and other things that five-star hotels typically had. And on a high-luxury end, people are also going to want more value for their dollar, and so it's up to the different hoteliers to figure out what that is going to be.

Ketaki Gokhale is a writer based in San Francisco.

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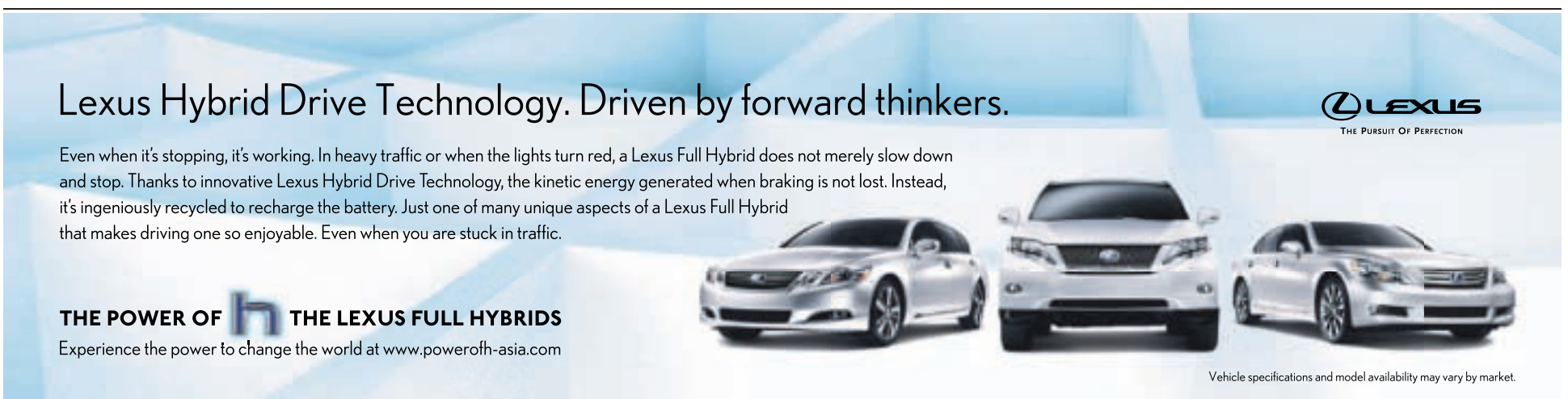
▶ To see photos of Dianna Wong's designs, click on **Asia.WSJ.com**.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So you want to be a....?

All you need to know to start your second career

By Sally Robinson

After graduating from medical school at London's Imperial College in 2008, Asanka Samaranayake should have breathed a huge sigh of relief. Instead, as he started his job at Charing Cross Hospital—working toward a specialization in neurology—he felt a nagging doubt that he was in the wrong profession.

"There was no passion within me," Mr. Samaranayake says now. "I did the job like a robot."

His disillusionment began in school. "Most of the time I was doing paperwork, not saving lives," says the 25-year-old Sri Lankan, who grew up in Hong Kong.

Then one night in 2006—during his fourth year in medical school—a friend introduced him to online foreign-exchange trading. He was hooked. Over the next two years, he traded currency online and made an average of US$500 a day. "It was effortless," he says.

In autumn 2008, after a few months at Charing Cross, Mr. Samaranayake walked away from a $63,000-a-year contract and went home to Hong Kong to earn a masters degree in business.

"In five years, I would love to be running my own hedge fund," he says.

Mr. Samaranayake is one of a growing number of people rethinking their careers and wondering if now is a good time to make a move. But what to do and how to do it pose big question marks.

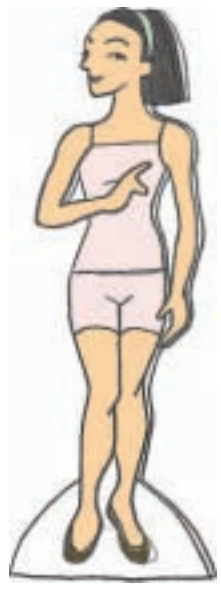
Job dissatisfaction is high: The Conference Board, a U.S. research group, reported last month that only 45% of Americans are happy with their jobs—the lowest level in its 22 years of studying the subject.

In Asia, the financial downturn has "forced a lot of people to re-evaluate what they are doing," says Dan Chavasse, managing director for China and Southeast Asia at headhunter Michael Page International.

These days, Mr. Samaranayake is living at home with his parents while he finishes his M.B.A. degree. "There is a part of me that feels I am letting [my parents] down, but I know they want me to be happy," he says.

In this special report on second careers, Weekend Journal investigated 10 career paths—from the learning curve (school) to the bottom line (salary). We also pinpoint key things to think about before you take the plunge and talk with people who made the switch to find out how they did it.

Sally Robinson is a writer based in Hong Kong.



Illustrations by John Lavin

DOCUMENTARY FILMMAKER

Learning curve: Intern with an established filmmaker and take film courses on the side. Melbourne University runs a two-week filmmaking summer course (www.summerfilmschool.com; US$1,639).
Foot in the door: Buy a prosumer camcorder and start shooting. Offer to run errands and log tapes in exchange for the opportunity to watch, listen and learn at a local film-production company.
When you're the boss: "At least 10 years," says Craig Leeson, CEO of Ocean Vista Films.
Worst thing about the job: You may never own a yacht, a house in Cannes or a Ferrari.
Best thing about the job: The stories you'll tell.
The bottom line: Most documentaries make only modest returns; many documentary producers have a second source of income producing television or commercial videos.

Samantha Sin for The Wall Street Journal

Tingting Peng

Former job: Research analyst
New job: Yoga teacher and personal trainer

Tingting Peng had been in banking for a few months when she started to feel miserable.

She had landed an investment-banking analyst job at Morgan Stanley in Hong Kong straight out of college when she was 21 years old. The salary was great for someone her age—US$50,000 base plus bonus—but the job was all consuming.

"After six months, I felt burned out," says Ms. Peng, who is now 26.

Gradually her health began to suffer. One bout of flu morphed into another, with viruses and stomach bugs in between. "I was sick for weeks on end, but I would self-medicate and still go to work," says Ms. Peng. Unhappy and unwell, she spent thousands of dollars on clothes, bags and shoes she didn't need. "I was looking to superficial things to make me feel better," she says.

She left Morgan Stanley after two years, then bounced between finance jobs for another two years. When the last one—as a research analyst with a hedge fund—cratered, Ms. Peng took a break and went to see her family in Boston.

Gradually the idea of starting her own fitness business began to crystallize. Exercise was the one thing that kept her going during her four-year finance stint. "Yoga," she says, "got me through a really tough period."

She returned to Hong Kong in the spring of 2009 with a plan to set up a yoga and personal-training business. With no expertise in the field, however, she first went back to school. A six-week course for yoga certification at Yoga Limbs cost $2,500; a five-week personal-training certification course at Optimum Performance Studio in Hong Kong cost $650. She also worked as a freelance financial consultant for Singapore-based Accelera Management, which sponsored her Hong Kong work visa and paid a small but steady income.

Despite the $370,000 in salary and bonuses she had earned in banking all told, Ms. Peng had no savings to cushion her transition. She launched her company, Iron Lotus, with about $2,000, which included $400 for printing business cards and fliers that she distributed herself. "It was a grass-roots effort," she says.

To cut her costs, Ms. Peng moved out of her swish apartment in Hong Kong's Soho District to a small studio, shrinking her monthly rent to $650 from $2,300. "I really enjoyed simplifying my life," she says.

Six months later, Ms. Peng has 12 clients and teaches eight yoga classes a week at local hotels and fitness clubs. She also works with Create Asia Land, a Hong Kong-based development company, helping to build a health and yoga program at its resort project, Sukha Samui, in Koh Samui, Thailand.

Today, Ms. Peng earns a third of her finance salary, but she's happy. "I know what I should appreciate now—my health, doing something that I love and am passionate about, and having the support of my family and friends."

SOMMELIER

Learning curve: Official training isn't required, but does help. Local schools offer classes: Check out the Academy of Wine Singapore (aow.pasr.net); the Hong Kong Sommeliers Association (www.hksa.org) and the Vocational Training Council (www.peak.vtc.edu.hk). But the best-known schools—which offer courses in cities world-wide—are the Court of Master Sommeliers, which awards a Master Sommelier (MS) certificate, and the Institute of Masters of Wine, which grants the Masters of Wine credential. Both offer peerless distinction in the oenology world, assuming you pass the exam—the MS exam is by invitation only. Just 168 people in the world hold MS titles; there are 279 Masters of Wine.
Foot in the door: Work at a wine retailer, become a waiter in a restaurant with an expansive wine cellar, move to Napa or Barossa Valley and get a job pouring at a winery's tasting room.
When you're the boss: Six years to make senior sommelier at a top hotel or restaurant.
A Masters of Wine takes two years of study, two exams and a dissertation (www.mastersofwine.org; US$9,600 tuition). Class study for the MS takes a total of seven days, with years in between to gain experience (www.masterssommeliers.org; about $2,500).
Worst thing about the job: Can't drink everything you pour.
Best thing about the job: Tasting the world's finest vintages.
The bottom line: A qualified sommelier in Australia earns US$56,000 to $93,000 a year. In North America, tasting-room managers at midsize wineries make $51,000. In Hong Kong, a sommelier earns US$20,500 to $48,000 a year; a chief sommelier at a large hotel, $54,000.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

Learning curve: In Hong Kong, a masters degree plus two years with a landscape-architecture firm is required to sit for the exams to be recognized by the Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects. Hong Kong University offers a two-year masters program in landscape architecture (www.fac.arch.hku.hk, US$23,000).
When you're the boss: Six years.
Foot in the door: Volunteer in green groups, get involved in environmental issues, study others' landscape designs.
Worst thing about the job: A farmer's tan
Best thing about the job: No suits, no heels required
The bottom line: In Hong Kong, annual salaries start at $30,000; someone with 20 years of experience can earn up to $225,000 a year. In Australia, a landscape designer with two years experience can expect US$42,000; someone with 15 years-plus experience can earn upward of $138,000.

SPORTS AGENT

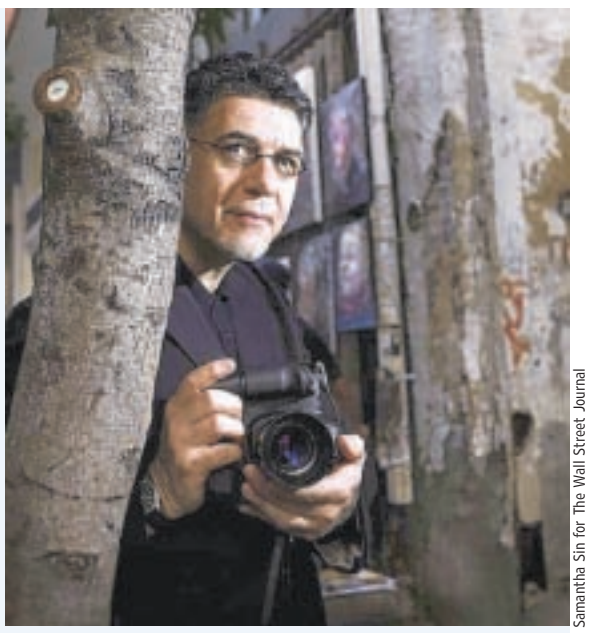
Learning curve: Get a degree in sports administration or management; a law, accounting or marketing degree helps, too. Hong Kong University offers a 16-month, part-time masters in sports administration (www.hkuspace.hku.hk; US$14,000).
Foot in the door: Get involved in organized sports. Volunteer at the local running club, do some junior-league coaching, or organize a local university sports program. "It makes a big difference to a CV to see organizational experience at a local club," says Julian Jackson, an executive with Total Sports Asia, a sports-marketing agency. And start making friends in the business—networking is vital.
When you're the boss: Five-plus years.
Worst thing about the job: Everyone is fitter than you.
Best thing about the job: Elite athletes on speed dial.
The bottom line: Annual salaries in the U.S. start at $28,000 and reach $100,000 to $150,000 after 10 or 15 years. Bigwig agents make more than $1 million a year.

HARLEQUIN ROMANCE NOVELIST

Learning curve: Read the pulp-fiction books churned out by Harlequin Enterprises. Join workshops and conferences held by romance-writer associations such as the Romance Writers Association—America and Australia both have one. Study the writer's guidelines at www.eHarlequin.com.
Foot in the door: The writers organizations often offer writing competitions and pitch sessions at conferences where authors can try to sell ideas to Harlequin editors and agents.
When you're the boss: Harlequin authors take between one and 11 years to get published.
Worst thing about the job: Working at home.
Best thing about the job: Working at home.
The bottom line: Harlequin won't talk numbers, but says only its established authors live comfortably from their book earnings.

SENIOR PRO-TOUR GOLFER

Learning curve: 10,000 holes, plus training. Some of the best go to the Titleist Performance Institute in California, for fitness training and a golf-swing "biomechanics" assessment ($5,000 and up).
Foot in the door: Hit holes, holes and more holes.
When you're the boss: It's a long, hard road. Age is only part of it: For the PGA Champions Tour, you must be at least 50; for the senior pro-am tour (the Southern Senior Golf Tour), at least 47. Qualifying is the bigger issue: Some say only the pros should consider becoming senior pros.
Worst thing about the job: You'll probably fail.
Best thing about the job: You tried.
The bottom line: The top two Champions money-makers earned nearly $2 million each in 2009. (The bottom 84 earned less than $25,000.) The top Southern Senior golfer last year won $10,825.



Samantha Sin for The Wall Street Journal

Evangelo Costadimas

Former job: Engineer
New job: Photographer/curator

Evangelo Costadimas gets a kick every time he tells people what he does: After working for 26 years as an engineer, he is now a curator and photographer. "I see the surprise on their faces—it's such an unexpected jump," he says.

Mr. Costadimas, 52 years old, an Ethiopian of Italian and Greek descent, spent 26 years with the Canadian telecommunications company Bell-Northern Research (now part of Nortel) and worked around the world, first in Canada, then Turkey, China and Japan before taking a post in Hong Kong.Though the company had been struggling for years, he was shocked when he was laid off in January 2007.

"It was a traumatic experience," he says of finding himself unemployed in his late 40s with what he calls a "disappointing" severance package.

Luckily he had something to fall back on—his love of photography. "When I was 11 or 12, my uncle gave me an Italian Ferrania Instamatic camera and...I got interested," he says. Over the years, even while traipsing the globe with Bell-Northern, he kept up his hobby.

He took photography courses in Toronto while working for Bell-Northern in the early '80s. In Istanbul, he shot portraits of everyday people in the streets. "Henri Cartier-Bresson and Robert Frank are my heroes," he says.

After a short stint in China in the late 1980s, Mr. Costadimas was transferred to Hong Kong in 1990. There, he exhibited his work at independent art spaces and enrolled in a two-year, part-time masters of fine arts program.

He had just finished his first year when he lost his job. "I could have looked for another job but I was getting weary of engineering," he says.

He decided to study full-time and finish his masters while he worked out a new career path. He also enrolled in a one-year certification course for art curatorship at Hong Kong Art School. "I wanted to...go deeper into the art world," he says.

Mr. Costadimas had just finished both courses in early 2008 when he got a call from Osage Gallery about a curator position. He started work the next day. "I put my photography to one side and went full steam ahead," he says.

But after 15 months at Osage, Mr. Costadimas left last summer to set up his own business combining freelance photography with independent curating for galleries. I'm on "a quest for myself," he says.

These days, he earns a fraction—20%—of the US$130,000 he used to make at Bell-Northern, and it's a struggle to make ends meet: "I am still relying on my savings," he says.

For the future, Mr. Costadimas intends to combine curating and his own photography-based art practice and pay the bills by freelancing as a photographer, professional art handler and whatever else comes along. "The prospect of where I will end up is scary but liberating. It's like being 23 and fresh out of school—except I've got 30 years' experience and knowledge about life in general."

CSI DETECTIVE

Learning curve: In Hong Kong, the job of crime-scene investigator is carried out by detectives. Join the force as a probationary inspector (a college education and Chinese-language skills are required). After basic training, attend a Standard Criminal Investigation Course (SCIC). In the U.S., several online schools offer degrees in criminal investigation; some prerequisites (such as science courses) may be required.
Foot in door: Join the Hong Kong police as an inspector and opt for a career path as a detective.
When you're the boss: It takes at least three to four years for a Hong Kong inspector to earn his stripes as a detective.
Worst thing about the job: It's not like the TV show.
Best thing about the job: Triumph of good over evil
The bottom line: In Australia, detectives earn US$40,000 to $74,000 a year. In Hong Kong, salaries for inspectors start at US$45,500 and rise to $98,000.

COMEDIAN

Learning curve: Forget about formal training. Get up on stage and learn from your failures.
Foot in the door: Call a venue—the Comedy Club in Singapore or Punchline in Hong Kong, for instance—and ask to do a five-minute "open spot" between acts.
When you're the boss: Five years. "It's the minimum time to accumulate enough material and be able to handle an audience," says John Moorhead, managing director of the Punchline Comedy Club Asia, which puts on shows across Asia.
Worst thing about the job: The learning curve
Best thing about the job: A lot of laughs
The bottom line: Popular U.K. clubs such as the Comedy Store in London pay $400 a night—some comedians fit in four shows a night and even more over a weekend. Most of the comics at Punchline Comedy Club Asia earn $835 or more for a 30-minute show at a corporate event.

Jonathan Perugia for The Wall Street Journal at Her Majesty's Theatre

Alistair Scott

Former job:
Equity-research analyst
New job: Actor

Alistair Scott, 51 years old, still remembers the day he realized he had to choose between his day job as an investment banker at Merrill Lynch Asia and his passion for acting.

It was eight years ago at the final dress rehearsal for a production of "Hamlet" in which he was playing Polonius. As the curtain fell for intermission at Hong Kong's Fringe Club, Mr. Scott dashed up to the roof in Shakespearean costume to close a deal for a major Chinese telecommunications company by phone.

"I can't juggle all this much longer," he thought to himself. But it would be another three years before he actually left banking for the stage.

Mr. Scott always loved acting, but at Oxford he took the "sensible route" and studied history. After graduating, he went into banking, squeezing in acting turns in local productions—Prospero in "The Tempest"; Aston in Harold Pinter's "The Caretaker."

Meanwhile his banking career took the typical climb: He arrived in Hong Kong with the private bank Dresdner Kleinwort Benson in 1994. Five years later, he was earning a high six-figure salary at Merrill Lynch running research on telecom, media and Internet companies in Asia. But Mr. Scott "was always wondering where this was all going."

On a whim during a business trip to London in 2003, he visited the Central School of Speech and Drama.

"I went in for a chat," says Mr. Scott, and sat down with Rob Clare, who established the school's masters program in classical acting. "I told him I had just played Prospero and he said, 'Get your jacket off and let's do some work.' I came out drenched with sweat and thought: This is what I want to do."

To his amazement, he was offered a place in the classical acting masters program. But courses began in autumn 2003, and he and his wife, Melissa, had just adopted two toddlers in Hong Kong. They couldn't move before settling the girls, ages 2 and 3.

"I was worried that was the end of the whole opportunity," he says.

He was wrong. Two years later, in September 2005, Mr. Scott—then 46—took an early-retirement package from Merrill Lynch and was again accepted at the Central School of Speech and Drama.

Four years on, Mr. Scott has carved out a life that combines acting with some corporate training and video work for consulting and marketing firms in London. Last year, he performed during the summer repertory season, including a turn as a night-club owner in Jim Cartwright's "Little Voice." But for now, it's back to the audition trail.

"Our income is still very sporadic, back to a modest five figures, and we are basically living on savings and investments," Mr. Scott says.

His banking days bought the family a $2 million, six-bedroom home in leafy Hampstead, and they still have a three-bedroom holiday house in Bali, but the collapse of Merrill Lynch last year has hurt the family's investment income. "The dividend has effectively disappeared," says Mr. Scott.

Even so, in his new life, he is more relaxed and enjoys spending time with his daughters, now 9 and 10. "I loved Hong Kong, but you did get that acid-churning feeling of working until 3 a.m. then making sure you are up again at 7 a.m. for a call," he says.

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▶ To watch videos of our three career changers, click on **Asia.WSJ.com**.

MICHELIN GUIDE FOOD CRITIC

Learning curve: A degree from a hotel-school program followed by five to 10 years of experience in the food-and-beverage industry is required. Hong Kong Polytechnic University School of Hotel and Tourism Management offers several courses (hotelschool.shtm.polyu.edu.hk). New inspectors train for six months with a senior Michelin inspector before going it alone.
Foot in the door: Send a resume to the guide (www.michelinguide.com). Food critics need not apply; Michelin won't hire anyone who can be recognized by chefs as a critic.
Worst thing about the job: The calories and kilos
Best thing about the job: Travel and 240 great meals a year
The bottom line: Michelin is mum about its pay scales, but one disaffected inspector claims it is around $32,800 a year.

ORCHESTRA CONDUCTOR

Learning curve: The most prestigious schools are Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, which runs a three-year, orchestral-and-choral-conducting course (www.siba.fi; free if you pass the selection process), and the Royal Academy of Music in London, which has a three-year postgraduate program (www.ram.ac.uk; $30,000 a year).
Foot in the door: Become an assistant conductor of an orchestra. "The role is nebulous," and includes understudying for the conductor, says Perry So, assistant conductor with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra. Winning a competition also helps.
When you're the boss: Five to 10 years, depending on your experience and your repertoire. Each piece of music takes months to learn. A good senior conductor knows 250 pieces or more. "I recently met a conductor who had 700 symphonies in his head," says Mr. So.
Worst thing about the job: Getting more than 80 musicians to perform in time.
Best thing about the job: The result when they do.
The bottom line: Assistant-conductor salaries start at $1,000 a week. A top senior conductor can make $50,000 a week.

Hold on, before you quit...

Many people think about making a change, but few—about 10%—follow through. "The vast majority play with the idea and step back from it," says John Lees, a career coach and author of "How To Get A Job You'll Love."

If you're going to make a career jump, be sure you prepare.

Start with some serious navel gazing. "Take an inventory of who you are and what you most like to do," says Richard Bolles, author of the bestseller "What Color is Your Parachute?" "Don't research the job market and think about what sort of work you could talk yourself into. You will do your best work if you are passionate."

Be patient. It may take two years—from the time you make a change—to establish yourself in a new line of work. Sometimes longer.

Talk it up. Tell everyone you know, says Mr. Lees, "what you are looking for: If you want to break into aviation tell people you are looking for the opportunity to talk to anyone in the industry....Find out what they do all day and what sort of people are successful at the job." Volunteer to work for free to get some experience, the career coach adds.

Consider going back to school. Richard Petty, an associate dean at Macquarie Graduate School of Management in Sydney, estimates that between 5% and 10% of the school's students are there to make a career change. One recent student had been a civil engineer for eight years. "He wanted to become a banker...and chose subjects that were financial-based," says Mr. Petty. After graduation, he landed a senior role at an investment bank.

Be positive. Changing your career takes courage, as well as optimism, motivation, determination and a long-term commitment. "You have to think positively," says Hong Kong executive coach Angela Spaxman. "If you are cynical you will find it tough."

Plan ahead financially. Working in a new industry usually means taking a lower-level job—and a lower salary. "Golden handcuffs keep a lot of people in jobs they don't like," says Ms. Spaxman. "People who are used to earning a lot will need to adjust."

Start by making a list of what your true financial commitments are—health care, rent or a mortgage, food—and stick to a budget. "It is surprising how people can cut back when they find something they really want to do," says Mr. Lees.

All by herself

Danielle Steel finally has her own home

By Nancy Keates

Brightly colored hearts are plentiful in the living room and entryway

John Bedell for The Wall Street Journal (2)

Danielle Steel is known for her uncommon houses: a 55-room mansion in San Francisco with a formal ballroom and an antique-rich library; a Paris apartment overflowing with taxidermy, including a stuffed giraffe in the entryway.

But it's a 3,000-square-foot cedar-shingled beach house in a low-key community on the California coast that Ms. Steel most considers home. "This is the first house I ever decorated how I liked," Ms. Steel, who has been married and divorced several times, said in a rare interview there on a recent afternoon. "I'm bolder now because I am not doing it for anyone else."

The main theme seen throughout the three-bedroom, one-story home is hearts, which appear in paintings, in prints and via pillows. Reds, oranges, pinks and lime greens jump out from paintings, sculptures and objects, and heart pillows are inscribed with sayings ("Real love stories never have endings," reads one). Ms. Steel's bed, situated underneath a heart painting, is covered with heart pillows, stuffed animals and cloth dolls. "It's less grown-up than the other places," says Victoria Leonard, a San Francisco designer who has been to all of Ms. Steel's homes. "It's fun and lively and bright."

When one of Ms. Steel's ex-husbands recently came to lunch, he surveyed the decor and remarked that it was clear she wasn't planning on getting married anytime soon. Ms. Steel laughed. With no new husband on the horizon, she said she has reached a point where she is happy with her independence.

"It's taken me a long time to get here," she said. Petite, with auburn hair in a ponytail, wearing large Chanel earrings, a puffy white down jacket and Marc Jacobs flats made to look like mice (with whiskers, ears and noses), Ms. Steel looks younger than her 62 years. "My relationships were never equitable. My husbands were always older than me, and they made the rules, they ran the show, and I followed them. Five years ago I was still willing to throw my whole life out the window—to change my whole life for someone. Now I want a voice in it."

That sentiment is echoed in her coming books, which focus on family as the central theme. In "Big Girl," due Feb. 23, an overweight girl struggles with her identity in a narcissistic family. "I'm not looking for a date, or a man, or a husband. I'm fine the way I am," says Annie, the lead character in "Family Ties," due for release June 22.

While many of her heroines end up happily attached to men, Ms. Steel doesn't like being labeled a romance novelist, noting she has also written nonfiction, poetry and children's books. Her 101 books have sold about 580 million copies worldwide. In 1989, Ms. Steel made "The Guinness Book of World Records" for having a book on The New York Times Bestseller list for 381 consecutive weeks—a record she has since broken.

'I'm bolder now because I am not doing it for anyone else': Her beachfront home, right, looks out on the Pacific Ocean.

The daughter of a German father and a Portuguese mother who divorced when she was 6, Ms. Steel grew up in Paris and New York. She married her first husband, a French banker, when she was 18 and wrote her first book at 19. She proceeded to marry several more times and to raise nine children, including a son Nick, who committed suicide in 1997 at 19.

Shortly after she married cruise-line executive John Traina in 1981, Ms. Steel bought a local landmark, a Beaux-Arts mansion built for sugar tycoon Adolph Spreckels. At the time she was a fixture in the San Francisco society scene, attending benefits and hosting dinners.

In 2001, when she says her marriage to venture capitalist Tom Perkins of Kleiner, Perkins, Caulfield & Byers was on the rocks, Ms. Steel decided to rent a house at the beach, because she'd always wanted one but "was never married to anyone who wanted a house there." She bought her current house in 2002 for $6.5 million, and it serves as the setting for her 2003 book "Safe Harbor." Mr. Perkins couldn't be reached for comment.

Ms. Steel said she rarely entertains or goes out in San Francisco anymore, and said she likes to spend time at this house with her children, playing board games or just hanging out.

"It's a very happy house," says Ms. Steel's daughter Vanessa Traina, 25, a free-lance fashion editor in New York who is often featured in Vogue. "We're a really close family and we all like to just hang out there all day." On her last visit Ms. Traina said she slept in the same room with her mom and her little sister, because Ms. Steel gave up her bedroom to another child who was there with a significant other.

Ms. Steel said the beach house is purely for relaxation—she writes at her San Francisco mansion. She doesn't entertain at the beach house—that's what the Paris apartment is for. She dates, but says she only wants someone who is "really nice, kind and intelligent. I've done difficult and I don't want difficult again."

A sign at the front door of her beach house reads "Coup de Coeur"—literally, in French, a blow to the heart. "I believe in love at first sight for houses—but not for people," Ms. Steel said, half joking.

Arbitrage

The i2 Segway

City	Currency	US$
New York		$6,215
Brussels	€5,595	$7,642
London	£5,200	$8,175
Rome	€5,988	$8,179
Hong Kong	HK$64,000	$8,235
Sydney	A$9,450	$8,464
Paris	€6,650	$9,083
Tokyo	¥981,750	$10,927
Shanghai	75,000 yuan	$10,976
Frankfurt	€8,530	$11,651
Bangkok	399,000 baht	$12,025

Prices, including taxes, converted to the nearest U.S. dollar

Segway

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Manhattan's East Side

BEACON COURT
E 50s. Extraordinary penthouse condo. 7 rooms, 4 bedrooms, 4.5 baths with huge living room, dining room, modern kitchen. 13' ceilings and panoramic Central Park, city and river views. Full service building. A must see. $21.7M **WEB# 1948679**
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Carol Cohen 212.836.1006

VACANT MANSION OFF PARK
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Park Ave. Mint 12 rooms/6 bedrooms, 6.5 baths, living room, library, window chef's kitchen with breakfast room, washer/dryer. Well suited to everyday living as well as grand and gracious entertaining. Pet friendly, white glove prewar Co-op. $17M
WEB# 1941462
Sharon E. Baum 212.836.1036

GRACIOUS SPACE, MOVE-IN
E 60s/Park Ave. 8,000 SF+/-. Mint 5 story. 5 bedroom + 2 staff rooms. Wide rooms, high ceilings, beautiful stairs, fireplace, 2-level kitchen, family room + pretty garden, library, living room + formal dining room. $15.9M **WEB# 1881625**
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TRIPLE MINT & PARK VIEWS
5th Ave. 3,300 SF+/-. Triple mint 3-4 bedroom/4.5 bath duplex with beautiful Central Park & city views. Completely renovated with best finish & high-tech. Fabulous entertaining. $12.9M **WEB# 1911979**
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PIERRE HOTEL PARK VIEW
5th Ave/E 61st St. 6 rooms. Grand apt. Unrestricted high Central Park view from living room, master bedroom, library, baronial sized rms. 6 rooms; 10' ceilings, prewar, full hotel services. $10.5M
WEB# 1952065
Betsy Messerschmitt 212.836.1059

PARK VIEW
5th Ave. Incomparably beautiful classic 6, 2 bedroom penthouse with wood burning fireplace & 2 awesome terraces south west over Central Park. This is the finest apt of its type on 5th Ave. Gorgeous décor complements a stunning renovation by celebrated designer. $8.3M **WEB# 1470989**
Daniel Douglas 212.875.2835
Emilie O'Sullivan 212.836.1028

4,000 SQUARE FEET ON PARK AVE
Park Ave/E 73rd St. 10 rooms. Corner 4,000 SF+/- private floor. Living room/formal dining room facing Park Ave. 4 bedrooms + staff room, library. Breakfast kitchen Gracious layout, details. $7.95M
WEB# 1377074
Carrie Chiang 212.836.1088

7 ROOMS WITH PARK VIEWS
5th Ave/E 79th St. LR, Lib, formal dining room, 2 bedrooms/2.5 baths, windowed eat-in kitchen, staff room/bath. All face Central Park. High floor, excellent condition, full service white glove postwar Co-op. Washer/dryer, central air conditioning, garage, no pets. $7.9M **WEB# 1851806**
Sharon E. Baum 212.836.1036

MODERN ELEGANCE
East End Ave. New high floor duplex in a Peter Marino designed condo. 6 rooms, 3 bedrooms, 3.5 baths, living room with wood burning fireplace, dining room, modern kitchen, 5 Juliet balconies, double height ceiling and river views. Full service building. Priced to sell. $6.25M **WEB# 1456922**
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MINT PREWAR CONDO
E 63rd St. 6 rooms. Barbizon-white glove condo, mint 3 bedrooms/3.5 baths, 2 terraces, west, east, north views, 2,500 SF+/- (interior), 400 SF+/- (exterior). . $5.9M **WEB# 1668428**
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LEGENDARY DUPLEX
E 50s. 3 bedrooms/3.5 baths. 30' x 32' living room with wood burning fireplace. 19' ceilings. 14' windows. Corner master bedroom with wood burning fireplace. Additional staff room offered $250K. $3.5M **WEB# 1890124**
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Park Ave/E 74th St. 6 rooms. Gracious 2 bedroom, 2.5 baths, gracious living room with decorative fireplace, dining room and solarium with a fabulous planted terrace overlooking Park Ave. North, West and East exposures. $3.25M **WEB# 1894190**
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SMART & STYLISH
E 51st St. 5 rooms. Reduced loft-like convert 3 bedroom/3 bath with 13 foot ceilings, formal dining room, fabulous city and river views. Mint. Luxury full service building condo. $2.999M
WEB# 1493362
Gilda Shani 212.979.7844

PARK AVENUE-8TH FLOOR
Park Ave. Sunny & elegant prewar classic 6. Grand, seldom available home facing Park Ave. Gracious room sizes and excellent light. 2,250 SF+/-. Washer/dryer. Wood burning fireplace. Full service Co-op. Gym. $2.95M **WEB# 1869824**
Patricia Cliff 212.836.1063

STUNNING 3 BEDROOM CONDO
E 70s. Mint condo. Loft-like 3 bedroom/3.5 bath with living room, formal dining room, library on high floor with fabulous skyline views. Beautiful oak floors, high end kitchen & marble baths. Gym & garage in building. $2.595M **WEB# 1937615**
Elizabeth Spahr 212.893.1735
Chris Kann 212.893.1426

MINT CONDO 2,077 SQUARE FEET
E 90s. 2 bedroom/3 bath condo. Great views from high floor new 2,077 SF+/-condo. North, east & west. Formal dining (convertible 3 bedroom) large gourmet eat-in kitchen, 24 hour doorman, gym, storage, play room. $2.525M **WEB# 1924510**
Karin Posvar-Picket 212.605.9248

2 BEDROOM FOR SALE
East End Ave. Loft-like condo 1,653 SF+/- 2 bedroom/2.5 bath apartment with 35' living room & 10'ceilings. 24 hour concierge and doorman. On-site parking garage. Located at 170 East End Avenue. $2.5M **WEB# 1887153**
Andrea Wohl Lucas 212.605.9297

VENETO CONDOMINIUM
E 50s. 4.5 rooms. 2 bedrooms & 2.5 baths all in triple mint condition. South, west & north city views. Custom lighting, moldings & electronics complete the package. 24 hour concierge & doorman. $2.395M
WEB# 1934447
Elyse Gutman 212.821.9126

GORGEOUS TOWNHOUSE APARTMENT
E 52nd St/Beekman Pl. Mint renovation. duplex - two full floors w/grand staircase, 4 wood burning fireplaces, grand living room, dining room, new chef's kitchen, 3 new baths, 2 bedrooms, great closets - great home. $2.195M **WEB# 1926583**
Beth Lowy 212.875.2863

SUTTON PLACE GEM
E 58th St. 5 rooms. Triple mint, newly renovated, 2 bedroom/2.5 bath, 1,800 SF+/-, views of river, bridge, city skyline. Full service building, concierge, valet garage, health club. $2,795 maintenance. $1.895M **WEB# 1296488**
Frederick Specht 212.848.0487

ENTICING & ELEGANT
3rd Ave/E 55th St. Mint 4 bedroom, extra large home. Open chef's kitchen, living room/dining room + wet bar. 4 bedrooms + play room, home office, & full laundry room. Perfect turnkey opportunity. $1.675M **WEB# 1423890**
Sherry Matays 212.875.2831

MINT 2 BEDROOM 2 BATH & BALCONY
E 79th St. 4.5 rooms. Brand new mint, extra large 2 bedroom, 2 bath with renovated kitchen, large living room, seperate dining alcove, 2 huge split bedrooms, 2 renovated baths, 17' balcony, full service doorman. $1.049M **WEB# 1953323**
Stacey Froelich 212.572.3172

TRIPLE MINT 1 BEDROOM
E 66th St. Large 3.5 rooms. Renovated, dining room/living room, central air conditioning bright west exposure, 24 hour doorman, garage. Full service building and allows pets. $1,080 maintenance. $685K
WEB# 1847899
Rose Grobman 212.848.0473
Barbara Chase 212.893.1746

PERFECT PAD
E 50s. Price reduced. Sunny alcove studio with open Southern views. Spacious, comfortable, well designed. Full service building with gym, roof garden & 24 hour garage. $419K. **WEB# 1916100**
Abby Levine 212.836.1011

BACK ON MARKET BEST RENTAL
Madison Ave/ E 80th St. 6 rooms. Extra large 3 bedroom/3 bath, 3,000 SF+/-. Luxury full service building, steps from Central Park. Owner open to offers. Bring clients: Negotiable. $20,000/Mo.
WEB# 1500760
Mercedes Schwartz 212.323.3299

3 BEDROOMS FOR RENT
East End Ave. Three 3 bedroom/3.5 baths apartments with full park views from every room. 24 hour concierge and doorman. On-site parking garage. Located at 170 East End Avenue. $10,000- $13,500/Mo. **WEB# 1560295**
Andrea Wohl Lucas 212.605.9297

Manhattan's West Side

SUPERB DUPLEX CONDO
W 60s. 8 room loft-like duplex steps from Central Park. 3 bedrooms + library and staff's room. Terrace off the living room with north/east/west exposures, double height ceiling in living room/dining room, 3 baths, 2 wood burning fireplaces. Full service building. Price reduction. $13.45M **WEB# 1221740**
Deborah Grubman 212.836.1055

PANORAMIC VIEWS
Central Park West. 2-3 bedroom. The very best. 10 windows on Park from high floor. Mint, central air conditioning, stereo, gourmet eat-in kitchen, paneled library, perfect layout. $12.395M **WEB# 1297001**
Anne Snee 212.836.1060

PARK-FACING SAN REMO 8
Central Park West/W 75th St. Grand prewar. 4 rooms on park. Baronial 8 into 7 epitomizes Central Park West living. Spectacular living room, dining room + library. Fabulous master suite. Rich prewar details. Excellent cond. A++ building. $9.995M
WEB# 1849889
Sherry Matays 212.875.2831

60' OF DIRECT PARK VIEWS
Central Park West. Prime 9 room. Grand, mint prewar. European elegance & detail. Exceptional windows frame 60' of Park views – living room, dining room & library. Expansive windowed eat-in kitchen, 4 bedrooms, full service. $7.995M **WEB# 1922232**
Sherry Matays 212.875.2831

UNIQUE DUPLEX PH, SPECTACULAR VIEWS
W 72nd St. 11 into 7 rooms, north, south and west exposures, architecturally designed penthouse surrounded by terraces & balconies. Grand living room with wood burning fireplace, library with wood burning fireplace, gourmet kitchen, formal dining room, 3 master bedrooms & 3.5 baths. Luxury full service condo with health club & pool. $4.495M **WEB# 1848045**
Joan C Billick 212.848.0474

LIFESTYLE CHOICE
W 59th St. Most desirable 3 bedroom/3 baths. Enjoy city/river views from this high floor, sprawling 2,000 SF+/- home. 9.5' ceilings, elegant finishes and excellent layout. Luxury condo, amenities, garage. $3.395M
WEB# 1947814
Enma Baron 212.875.2868
Wendy Stark 212.875.2846

THE BERESFORD
Central Park West/W 80s. Gracious layout w/grand foyer, 2 bedroom/2 bath, large living room, wood burning fireplace, huge chef's kitchen, high ceilings, original details, washer/dryer. Fabulous white glove prewar building. $3.15M **WEB# 1872184**
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SPECTACULAR VIEWS
Riverside Blvd. Trump Place. 2 bedroom/2 baths. New York City sophisticated living at its best. Great layout for entertaining, high ceilings, split bedrooms. Luxury condo building with excellent amenities & garage. $2.285M **WEB# 1895680**
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EXPANSIVE BROMLEY HOME
Broadway/W 83rd St. 7 room condo. Bright, flexible 4 bedroom (or 3 + library) with open views. Huge windows, double living room/dining room & split bedrooms. Separate laundry room + excellent storage. Fabulous location. Full service building. A+ amenities. $2.195M **WEB# 1941685**
Sherry Matays 212.875.2831

CONDO - LOCATION & VIEWS
W 57th St. High floor 2 bedroom/2 bath condo. Fabulous Central Park & City views. Huge bay window. Washer/dryer, window kitchen. Full service building, pool & gym. Prime location near Park & Columbus Circle. $2M **WEB# 1895582**
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32ND FLOOR CONDO
W 42nd St. Large 2 bedroom, 2 bath condo. All new, top finishes. Great closet space. Central air conditioning. Full city view. South and west exposures. Gym, pool, sauna. Low common charges. Priced to sell. $1.495M **WEB# 910329**
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LUXURY & PRICE
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Spencer Means 212.875.2844

CENTRAL PARK SPLENDOR
Central Park South. Trump Parc. Perfect pied-a-terre. This large 1 bedroom with 1.5 baths is situated on a high floor with fantastic city and park views in one of New York City's finest condos. $1.35M
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STUNNING 2 BEDROOM CONDO
W 60th St. The Hudson. Mint 2 bedroom/2 bath in new full service condo. Loft-like with open kitchen and floor to ceiling windows. Hardwood floors. Gym, playroom, roof deck. $1.15M **WEB# 1877993**
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W 121st St. Classy 4 story brownstone, original details, pocket doors, Pier mirror, fireplace, high ceiling, large window. Live/invest. Own a dream. Don't miss this incredible chance. $1.15M **WEB# 1891798**
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PREWAR 2 BR CONDO UNDER $1M
W 93rd St. 4 rooms. Prewar 2 bedroom condo on a high floor, with high ceilings, archways, herringbone floors, windowed kitchen & bath, washer/dryer, full service doorman. $999K **WEB# 1890311**
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UNIQUE TRIPLEX HOME
W 101st St. Fabulous 850 SF+/- triplex, 1 bedroom/2 baths + guest room/office. Only 1 flight up the living room boasts a double-height ceiling. Beautifully renovated and very unique. Lovely finish throughout. North and east exposures. 80% financing. $695K
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John Gasdaska 212.821.9138

THE TOULAINE
W 67th St. Lovely 1 bedroom/1 bath in full service building located in the heart of the Upper West Side. Perfect starter or pied-a-terre. Common roof terrace & Zen garden. Live in super, 24 hour doorman. North exposure. $555K **WEB# 1944369**
Joseph Dwyer 917.841.6297

Downtown Manhattan

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West Chelsea. Full-floor penthouse at 11th Ave. 4,787 SF+/-, 3 bedroom/3.5 baths with 360 degree views, 2 huge terraces, 11' ceilings & terrazzo floors. Truly spectacular. $15.95M **WEB# 1941897**
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TRIBECA PERFECTION
TriBeCa. 3 level penthouse. Impeccable sun filled condo. 2 roof terraces. Breathtaking south/west/north views from every angle. Central air conditioning, dishwasher. Stunning finishes. Pets OK. A must see. $14.75M **WEB# 1955231**
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MIXED USE TOWNHOUSE
Gramercy Park. 7,236 SF+/-. 2 floor commercial, 3 floor residential with 2 fabulous terraces. Alarm system, original detail. This property has endless possibilities. Vacant. $12M **WEB# 1878992**
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Greenwich Village/Bleecker St. Commercial/Residential. Unused air rights. Can build additional 3,500 SF+/-. Music club with double height ceiling. 2 full-floor apts. above. Full basement. $6.995M
WEB# 1946989
Martha Friedricks-Glass 212.836.1031
Anne Snee 212.836.1060

PRIME PENTHOUSE
Greenwich Village. Rare penthouse on W 12th St, 2 bedroom, formal dining, 2.5 baths, terrace wraps south/west & north, fireplace, impeccable designer renovation, window kitchen + baths. $5.395M
WEB# 1895684
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TRUE VALUE
SoHo. True value is defined by this 3,142 SF+/-, 3 bedroom loft with fireplace, high ceilings, exposed columns, part time doorman in prime SoHo. The charm & character are priceless. $4.6M
WEB# 1387156
Eileen Robert 212.875.4050

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TriBeCa. 3,000 SF+/-. Amazing, wide, full floor loft. 12.5' ceilings. Gorgeous light. Huge new windows. Corinthian columns. Small Co-op with no underlying mortgage. North and south exposures. $2.7M
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Amalia Ferrante 212.941.2515

SUPERBLY APPOINTED
Flatiron/Broadway. If you are looking for an apartment with character, charm, and space, this one is a must see. Grand and stately 2 bedroom + den home in historical building. 14' tin ceilings, 2,000 SF+/-, excellent central location. North exposure. $1.45M
WEB# 1868031
Teri Cavanaugh 718.499.8351

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Spring St. Sublime penthouse duplex, panoramic views, 2 fireplaces, wine storage, amazing deck, outdoor shower & more. Sun-filled 3 bedroom/3 bath + terrace. $25,000/Mo. **WEB# 1947876**
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Brooklyn

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Sandra Cordoba 718.923.8038

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Prospect Pl/Vanderbilt Ave. Contemporary triplex with access to 56' deep garden and decked area, 4 bedroom/3 bath (spa/master suite) + 1 bedroom top floor separate rental, gorgeous yard, move right in. Landmarked. $1.775M **WEB# 1944133**
Peter Gordenstein 212.444.7890

FOUR BEDROOM DUPLEX
Park Slope/President St. Condo. 1,970 SF+/-, 4 bedrooms, 3 baths, 2 private outdoor spaces, radiant heat, central air conditioning, designer kitchen, private keyed elevator, city views. $1.749M **WEB# 1917124**
Patricia Neinast 718.832.4146

RIVER VIEWS & SUNSETS
Brooklyn Heights/Montague St. 6.5 room, 3 bedroom/2.5 bath. Fully renovated triple mint prewar Co-op, small bone windowed eat-in kitchen, elegant living room/dining room entertaining area, bay windows, high end finishes, decorative fireplace, washer/dryer, roof deck. $1.65M **WEB# 1951110**
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SWEEPING VIEWS
DUMBO-Vinegar Hill/Adams St. Sweeping Manhattan views. Welcome home to your mint 2 bedroom/2 bath condo. Top-of-line kitchen, 3 exposures, hardwood floors, washer/dryer. Full time doorman, gym, garden & roof deck. $889K **WEB# 1945229**
Patricia Neinast 718.832.4146

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Park Slope. Rare top floor newer condo on beautiful 2nd St, sensational view of all of Manhattan + Statue of Liberty, mint condition, window kitchen + bath, balcony, low carry. South, east and west exposures. $525K **WEB# 1943807**
Roseann Barber 212.444.7807

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Sell biology

How a tissue-culture tale became a hot title

By Alexandra Alter

Manda Townsend

When Rebecca Skloot began researching her book about Henrietta Lacks, a Maryland woman whose cancer-cell cultures led to medical breakthroughs such as the polio vaccine, she had no idea it would take her 10 years, four editors and three publishers to get the nonfiction story into print.

Her first publisher, W.H. Freeman, was taken over by Henry Holt in 2001. When her manuscript landed at Times Books, a Henry Holt division, her new editor had a drastically different vision for the book—one that cut out the story of the woman's family.

"I just said no, which was sort of crazy," says Ms. Skloot, 37 years old.

Wrangling out of the contract took her about a year. (Henry Holt's director of publicity said people involved with Ms. Skloot's book were no longer at the company.) Ms. Skloot got a new agent and sold the book at auction to Crown in July 2003, for a six-figure advance.

In early February, Ms. Skloot's "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks," her first book, sold out the first day it went on sale. Within two days, Crown reprinted the book three times, rushing a total of 100,000 copies into print. The title shot up Amazon's bestseller list to No. 4.

Ms. Skloot's book spans eight decades and tells the story of Ms. Lacks, an African-American whose cell tissue was harvested in 1951 without her consent and went on to be replicated billions of times. Scientists working with her cell cultures, known as HeLa cells, have developed cancer treatments, vaccines, and in-vitro fertilization and cloning technology.

Ms. Skloot attributes the book's early success to the remarkable story of Ms. Lacks, who died of cervical cancer in 1951. The book has elements of a detective tale, exploring the mystery of how one woman's cells proliferated when previous attempts to grow human cell cultures had failed, and the unfolding family drama as Ms. Lacks' descendants, most of whom were unaware of the extent of her contributions to medicine, learn the truth decades after her death.

Such overnight success is increasingly rare in publishing—especially for a relatively unknown author writing about cell tissue. The book's quick rise was the product of a trifecta of traditional marketing tactics, Ms. Skloot's own self-publicity blitz and a book with the bestseller qualities that generate word of mouth. The medical-mystery chronicle of Ms. Lacks is undergirded by a story about race relations. Ms. Skloot's struggle to win over Ms. Lacks' descendants and tell their story is interwoven throughout.

A science journalist and daughter of poet and writer Floyd Skloot, the author has been aggressively promoting the book for months through her blog and Facebook and Twitter accounts. Her efforts were propped up by the publisher's campaign. Months ago, Crown unleashed 3,000 advance readers editions—three times as many as usual—not just to book critics and literary bloggers but to science bloggers, bioethicists, editors of African-American Web sites and magazines, college professors and 50 active Amazon reviewers, says Tina Constable, Crown's vice president and publisher.

Now, Crown is capitalizing on a wave of positive reviews, and keeping the chatty, photogenic author in front of the cameras. Ms. Skloot is on a four-month, 51-city book tour that she organized and is largely paying for through speaking honorariums at colleges and institutes.

Crown anticipated the book would strike a chord with readers. "It…is very unique," says Ms. Constable. Their high expectations for the book were confirmed when glowing trade reviews came in and booksellers began asking about the title months in advance. Still, they were unprepared for the onslaught of demand for the book.

Ms. Skloot spent 10 years reporting and writing about Ms. Lacks, whose name she first heard in a biology class when she was 16. Initially, she supported herself on free-lance writing assignments, credit cards and student loans. She pitched science stories in Baltimore and Virginia, where Ms. Lacks's family lives, to cover her travel expenses. Distilling a decade of research into a 328-page book was daunting. She and her editor worked late into the night, emailing edits at 3 a.m, and she says she went through five full rewrites. Still, Ms. Skloot, who says she's being "held up as the poster child for self-publicity," says it helps to know how to hustle. "Books just can't go out and become a phenomenon on their own," she says.

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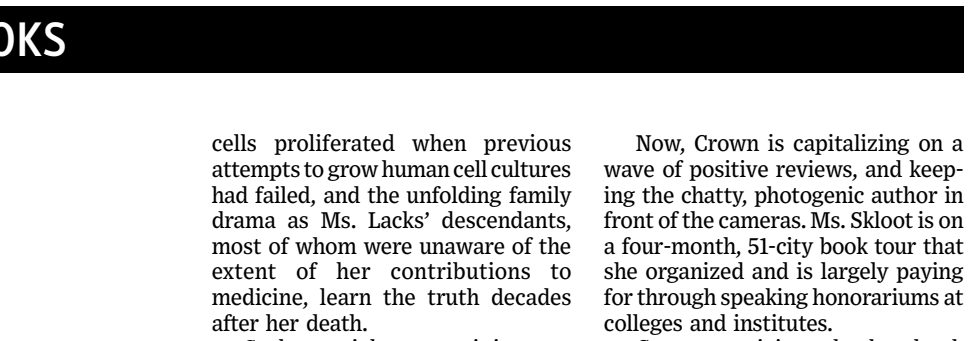

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Bookshelf / *By Tatiana Lau*

China's Long, Strange Road Trip

Driving in China is so stressful that among expatriates, obtaining a license is often met with incredulity rather than congratulations. In a country that has only just surpassed the United States in automobile sales but whose death toll on the roads is five times higher, why would a foreigner risk life and limb by getting behind the wheel? To which Peter Hessler responds, "I can't believe you get into cabs and buses driven by graduates of Chinese driving courses."

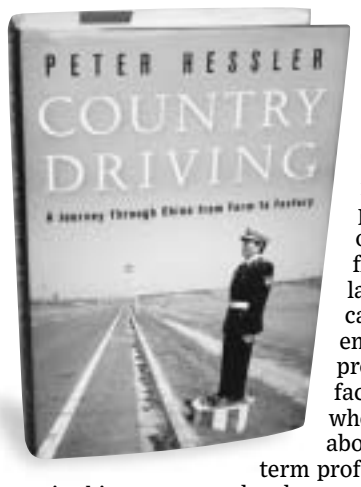
Country Driving: A Journey through China from Farm to Factory
By Peter Hessler
(HarperCollins, $27.99, 438 pages)

After reading the description of a driving school in "Country Driving," one has to admit Mr. Hessler has a point. But more importantly, passing the idiosyncratic license test—the questions preview the bizarre driving practices to be found on the road—enables him to discover a world not usually explored by Western journalists. A former Beijing correspondent for the New Yorker magazine and author of two previous books about China, he is well-equipped to be our guide. He throws a tent and sleeping bag into the back of a rented Jeep Cherokee, along with a mess of Coke, Gatorade, Oreos and Dove Bars, and sets off.

Consulting a copy of "The Chinese Automobile Driver's Book of Maps," Mr. Hessler decides to follow the printed crenellations of the Great Wall west into the arid heartland of the country, picking up hitchhikers as he goes. Many of these passengers are young women returning home from jobs in the city, looking out of place in their newly acquired city clothes. Their heavily applied cheap perfume becomes so familiar that he dubs it Eau de Inner Mongolia.

These woman and their home villages with names that recall Ming dynasty border wars—"Smash the Hu," "Slaughter the Hu" and "Pacify the Hu"—represent the starting point of the ongoing migration of rural residents into the cities. As in much of the countryside, Mr. Hessler finds few farmers of working age left. Without pounding the reader over the head with big themes, this journey's common thread is the confusion of those who are jumping from medieval farm life to the world of Starbucks and iPhones—and the alienation of those left behind. Often more interesting than their own stories are the questions they ask of this strange being who motors into their midst. "You're not from China, are you?" many ask ten minutes into a conversation, afraid of being impolite.

Guesses range from Muslim Chinese to Turkish, but the queries are all tied together by their askers: people who have left home to pursue their dreams of larger things. Mr. Hessler's license is not only good for driving these hitchhikers to remote provinces; it also enables him to take up residence in a village outside Beijing. There he discovers another case study of modernization—the Communist Party's success in keeping smarter peasants from revolting by dangling the prospect of membership. When he gets restless again, his license allows him to travel to the south to observe interactions among employees of a factory that makes brassiere rings.



Mr. Hessler's genius has always been in his wry commentary and ability to transcribe the rhythms of his environment onto the page. As his various rented cars receive beatings from unpaved roads, the pace of change remains the only constant. Revisiting a town means learning new landmarks: "It occurred to me that only in China could you visit a mountain and then, two years later, find it replaced by something called the Renli Environmental Protection Co., Ltd."

The government's focus on rapid change means that even among Chinese there is little awareness of those left behind. This short-term mentality reappears throughout the story, from the nonchalance of local cadres regarding environmental protection to the factory owners who care little about their long-term profits. At the macro level, governments change policies so often their citizens frequently have to readjust their bearings. At a micro level, the brassiere ring factory bosses begin to look for ways to reduce costs just as they begin to make a profit and overstretch their 20 employees. Shortly after that, they come to the abrupt conclusion that they need to move the factory to another upstart town where the cost of land is lower.

And what happens to those who prosper and embrace modernity? In Sancha, a village a few hours north of Beijing, Mr. Hessler observes a family transformed by the success of the father's restaurant. Suddenly the family has a television and an abundance of junk food left over from their guests, and the family's young son grows overweight. The mother becomes a devout Buddhist to deal with her inability to escape her past as her husband has been able to do. The father's ego and cigarette addiction expand along with his business, until a race for the post of local party secretary bursts his bubble. All the while a mountain of clutter grows in their home: gifts the father receives and shrines the mother builds.

From this cast of thousands emerges a picture of great hopes tinged with sadness at what is being cast aside without second thought. Some migrants are attracted to American self-help books, some to religion, and others just want to make money to support their families. On the wall of a workers' dormitory, one writes an exhortation to himself, "I swear I will not return home until I am famous." Most have yet to realize that they are never going home.

Ms. Lau is a Princeton in Asia fellow at The Wall Street Journal Asia.

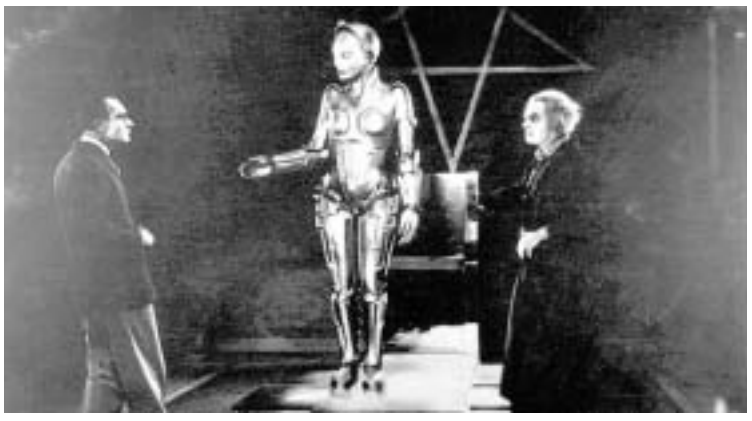
'Metropolis' Now

By A.J. Goldmann
Berlin

Fritz Lang's "Metropolis" is among the most iconic and influential movies of all time, referenced (and lovingly ripped off) by everyone from Stanley Kubrick to Luc Besson. It depicts not only a fantastical city of elegance and splendor, built on the back of workers who toil underground, but the sexy robot who is engineered by a mad scientist to destroy this new Babylon. Few films have been so enjoyed by generations of film buffs and pored over by scholars. Few films, too, have had such a fraught history or existed in so many versions. Now, 83 years after its Berlin premiere, "Metropolis" can finally be seen as Lang originally intended it. Well, almost.

A restored version that incorporates over 20 minutes of newly discovered footage was screened last Friday at the 60th Berlin International Film Festival. Tickets to the gala, featuring the original score performed by a live symphony orchestra, sold out quickly. Throngs of cinéphiles braved subfreezing temperatures to congregate at Pariser Platz, where the film was beamed onto a screen set up at the Brandenburg Gate.

Since the 1980s, there have been multiple attempts to reconstruct the film using imperfect sources. Until now, the most definitive version was the 124-minute 2001 restoration supervised by the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation. That organization, named for the great movie director, is dedicated to preserving Germany's cinematic heritage and also behind the current restoration.


Finally, the film as Fritz Lang originally intended it. Well, almost.

In 2008 a 16mm negative was found in Buenos Aires that ran nearly half an hour longer than any known "Metropolis" print. Incorporating this new footage, the version screened at the festival runs 147 minutes—just six minutes shy of the running time of the film shown at the Jan. 10, 1927, Berlin premiere.

Those hoping to discover more lascivious outtakes might be disappointed that the restored material mainly makes the narrative less disjointed. While "Metropolis" came under attack for some sexual content, most of the censorship cuts were restored in the '70s and '80s.

At the time of its release, "Metropolis" was one of the most elaborate and expensive films ever made. It nearly bankrupted UFA, the studio that was home to the German film industry during the Weimar Republic. Audiences in 1927 apparently had difficulty with a hyperstylized 2-hour science-fiction epic whose complex and confusing narrative had strong social and religious undertones. When Paramount acquired the film that same year for U.S. release, it shaved off nearly 40 minutes.

"They turned it into more of a Frankenstein story and softened the film's Christian themes," Martin Koerber, one of the restorers, explained at a news conference the morning of the gala. UFA embraced the American-made cuts that Lang felt mutilated his film. Late in life, the director is reported to have answered a question about "Metropolis" from the author Robert Bloch by asking, "Why are you so interested in a picture that no longer exists?"

For decades, the original cut of "Metropolis" was looked on as a cinematic Holy Grail. The 16mm print found in Argentina appears to have been created from a now-lost 35mm nitrate print that the Argentine film distributor Adolfo Z. Wilson, who saw the movie in Berlin in January 1927, took back with him to Buenos Aires. The 16mm print was acquired by a private collector who donated it in 1992 to the Museo del Cine Pablo C. Ducrós Hicken in Buenos Aires. It remained unwatched in the museum's archives until 2008.

Without a reliable script of Lang's cut of the movie, the print was verified, in part, by seeing how well it played to the original score by Gottfried Huppertz. "That score is the only complete document from the 1927 premiere," said conductor Frank Strobel after the dress rehearsal. "The music played a big role right from the beginning because the film's editing was based to the score itself." Since 1975, there have been many soundtracks written, performed or recorded for "Metropolis," including one by Giorgio Moroder for his 1984 color-tinted restoration. For those familiar only with Moroder's music, featuring Freddie Mercury and Pat Benatar, Huppertz's operatic score is a revelation.

"The score gave us the information for the *gestalt* of the film," added Mr. Koerber, explaining that the music was also the basis for the 2001 reconstruction. But back then, Mr. Strobel complained, he needed to bend and break the music to fit the film. Not anymore. "When you put the score beneath the images, everything was clearer and flowed better," he said.

At the dress rehearsal for the gala screening, the montage synched up superbly to the lush, neo-Romantic score as played by the Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester Berlin. The marriage of sound and image was especially gripping during the film's final act, when the workers revolt and the subterranean city is flooded.

The main differences between the restorations of 2001 and 2010, Mr. Koerber said, was that the new footage (of poor visual quality despite restoration attempts) greatly affects the rhythm of the film, especially during the workers' rampage. On a narrative level, the restored scenes flesh out some characters' relationships, most crucially the rivalry between Joh Fredersen, one of the masters of Metropolis, and the mad scientist Rotwang. Other scenes detail the comic adventures of the worker who trades places with the film's hero, Freder, one of Metropolis's privileged sons.

"It becomes clearer that this isn't just a sci-fi movie," explains Mr. Koerber, adding that the film's humanistic aspects are now more easily identifiable.

Is this the most complete "Metropolis" we will ever see? Or will the remaining lost footage (indicated in the current version by a handful of intertitles that describe the missing action) someday be found? Mr. Junkersdorf replies, "Miracles sometimes happen."

Mr. Goldmann writes about culture from Berlin and New York.

Made for movies

Dennis Lehane has a knack for getting his books made into good films

By Michelle Kung

Practically all novelists who have seen their books adapted for the screen have had their souls ripped apart at least once. Not so with Dennis Lehane, whose novels "Mystic River" and "Gone, Baby, Gone" were turned into well-regarded films by directors Clint Eastwood and Ben Affleck, respectively. "I'm so aware that I'm out in a minefield, but I just haven't stepped on a mine yet," says Mr. Lehane, a movie freak himself. "It's difficult, because Hollywood is mostly mines and there's only a little soil."

Director Martin Scorsese's take on Mr. Lehane's pulpy 1950s noir "Shutter Island," stars Leonardo DiCaprio as a paranoid U.S. Marshal investigating a disappearance at a mental hospital.

How have you been so fortunate in who makes these movies?

A lot of it has been luck, and some of it has been a very specific desire to only work with people at a very high quality level. So people like Clint and ["Gone Baby Gone" producer] Alan Ladd Jr. I think Ben did a great job on the film, but I'm not going to say that I was so wise that I knew he would be a great director his first time out. I came to the project through Alan, who produced "Blade Runner" and "Braveheart," for God's sake. With quality people, in the worst- case scenario, if you don't hit a home run, you'll at least hit a triple.

What was it like dealing with Scorsese?

For the first time in my life, I met somebody who not only knew more about movies than me, but knew vastly more about movies than me. Not only had I not seen things he was throwing out at me, which is rare, but he knew of films that I haven't even heard of, which is unheard of. He was shocked that I'd never seen "The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari," which he was sure was an influence, and "Time Limit," the only feature Karl Malden ever directed. When I said that "Manchurian Candidate" was an inspiration, he just said, "Oh, that's obvious."

"Shutter Island" has a more cinematic tone than your other books. What films influenced it?

Definitely "The Wicker Man," the 1973 version. "Invasion of the Body Snatchers," because of what it was doing with allegory. I wanted the book to have a real pulpy feel. Marty really got the tone; you can tell by the actors' dialogue, which is not the dialogue of people in the 1950s, but rather the dialogue of how people spoke in 1950s movies. To throw in some books, "Wuthering Heights" and Patrick McGrath's "Asylum" were titles I thought about a lot. To be honest, the critical reaction to "Mystic River" freaked me out a little—there's a part of me that's so contrarian that I thought, if they got it, I must have done something wrong. So I had to do something that's a bit back to my punkier roots.

You have a cameo in "Mystic River" as the mayor. Do you generally enjoy being on film sets?

I don't hang around film sets for the most part because a) they're incredibly boring, and b) a novelist is as useful on a film set as a giraffe. Plus, I like having the illusion that everyone else in the audience does.

What's the status on a film adaptation of your historical novel "The Given Day?"

Sam Raimi's working on it. I believe he's hiring a screenwriter as we speak.

I'm a huge fan of "A Simple Plan," which I think is one of the most underrated films of the last [15] years, and came out before "Spider-Man" blew him into the stratosphere. So I'm totally down with him. I'm also just finishing up the sixth book in the Patrick Kenzie & Angela Gennaro series, my first in nearly 11 years.

OPENING DATES

'Shutter Island'

Feb. 25: New Zealand, Singapore
Feb. 26: Taiwan
March 18: South Korea
April 9: Japan

Paramount Pictures

Novelist Dennis Lehane and actor Leonardo DiCaprio on the set of 'Shutter Island'

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